[ARCHERS]

Philters are also used by Mbuti girls. One further possible obstacle to marriage, outside normal rules of exogamy, exists among the archers: marriage is prohibited between two bands associated by common marriage ties with a third band. Thus if Bands A and B habitually marry with Band C, then intermarriage between Bands A and B is forbidden.[2] Restrictions on marrying into one's matrilineage apply only to the first generation; a child may not marry into its mother's band.

A number of early sources mention marriage by purchase (Casati, 1891; Stuhlman, 1894; Burrows, 1898). Czekanowski (1924), relying on information from neighboring villager tribes, writes of marriage both by purchase and by service and apparently learned nothing of marriage by exchange among the Mbuti. Schebesta (1948, 366) writes that, while marriage by purchase is the custom among the village tribes of the Ituri, Mbuti marriage is distinguished by being essentially by sister exchange. Otherwise the man may offer a quiver of arrows, five chickens, and 10 hoes (cited for *Eba-eba* camp); and among the southern archers chickens, hoes, spears, and arrows are used—all obtained from the villagers by begging or by trade, never money. The archers of Banyari, on the edge of

[2] It should be remembered that all the time Schebesta is thinking of the *Lokalgruppe*, or band, primarily as a patrilineage.

[P. 180-D]

[ARCHERS]

[P. 181-A]

583 the forest, pay a dog, five spears, and five arrows. Schebesta also cites the third possibility: a youth lives with his wife's band for some years, "pays" for his wife by his service to that band, then returns with her to his own band. If the payment or service proves to be insufficient, the girl's lineage claims the children, which otherwise belong to the father's band. Marriage by capture is unknown, and there are no indications that this practice ever existed.

583 585 [177] Nuptial ceremony is lacking among most Mbuti, but Schebesta says that in imitation of the Lese the southern archers practice a form of double ceremony in which the two bands formally meet and exchange their daughters. Normally, however, the archers seem to have, if anything, little ceremony. A youth, having secured the agreement of his betrothed, takes her back to his camp, with or without the permission of her band. There she lives with his mother, who teaches her the customs of the camp. Shortly afterward members of her band arrive. They demand their side of the bargain, either a bride in exchange or a gift of arrows,

[ARCHERS]

583 axes, and other implements. If the young man is
585 unable to produce these, they take the girl back to her own camp, but cannot prevent her from returning to her betrothed. The process is then repeated. The youth exhorts his betrothed to return to her own camp until he can find the necessary wealth, but if she insists on staying with him, her relatives will leave her and the matter will be settled later. The girl builds a house, and the two live together. There is no ceremony, although the youth's band will, if possible, arrange a feast and dance to celebrate the event. The marriage contract, such as it is, is essentially between the two bands concerned.

583 Marriage by exchange, by which two hunting bands exchange girls, has its complications. The girl received replaces the girl given, not only in her capacity for work but as a child bearer. If either girl falls short in these respects, the double union is nullified. Similarly, if either of
[586] the parties willfully brings about the dissolution of one marriage, the contract is void, thus possibly breaking up the other perfectly happy and fertile union. This dissolution can be avoided either by making another exchange or by substituting a payment.

595 Marriage by exchange is not conducive to the practice of polygyny, and Schebesta (1952, 244) estimates that 6 per cent of Mbuti marriages are polygynous; 10 per cent, in the border re-

[P 181-B]

[NET HUNTERS]

621 [P. 221-A]
581 exogamy have been observed. When it is
582 between two bands, then the Mbuti prefer
them to be as far apart as possible. The trouble
628 they envisage in a marriage with a member of a
58 nearby band is friction between themselves and
574 the village patron of the incoming bride. He
174 will constantly assert every claim he has, or
thinks he has, to her services, even to her
children when she revisits her own band. As
628 far as the two Mbuti bands are concerned, such
583 a marriage would be on an exchange basis, thus
maintaining the economic balance of each band.
[584] If the groom's band cannot find a suitable
girl to offer, his mother's band may be asked to
find one. There is always the alternative of
compensation or service, or both. For compen-
sation the help of the village patron is usually
sought, and the marriage is arranged by him.
[585] Such marriages are usually subject, in the
first place, to the normal Mbuti custom, which
involves no ceremony other than a mutually
agreeable exchange and a token offering of
gifts, such as a few arrows.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P.251-C]

general acceptance of villager superiority among the Mbuti, although some individuals may rarely seek to increase their status by emulating their villager neighbors. From general observation I would say that the hunting band tolerates an occasional marriage to a villager because of its economic and political advantages, to which they are very alive and of which they take full advantage when it suits them. They receive little payment for the girl they give (a fraction of what the villager would give another villager), but they consider that they then have a villager they can well and truly "eat."

Ceremonial Attendant on Birth, Initiation, Marriage, and Death

All the areas of contact between the Mbuti and their villager neighbors so far mentioned have been in or near the village. This point is of no small importance. The Pygmies always make the move, make contact or break it, and they take care that, apart from occasional visits from villager individuals to their hunting camp, all contact takes place in the village. Also, the areas of contact so far described could all be explained away at a more or less superficial level. The degree to which trade and adoption of villager magical practices and beliefs actually affect the forest life of the Mbuti is bound to vary from band to band. But among the Epulu net hunters, at least, the points of contact described above have not affected their nomadic way of life unduly.

1: Turnbull E-4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

These Mbuti, however, just as much as others, *appear* to have adopted villager religious beliefs and practices. This could be taken as symptomatic of a much closer relationship involving a shared system of values. We cannot help noticing, further, that by retaining a monopoly of ritual specialists the villagers effectively seem to assert their superiority over the Mbuti. When birth or death takes place among the Mbuti while they are in the vicinity of the village, the local villagers take a prominent part in the appropriate festivities, appropriate according to their custom, that is. Marriage between Pygmies, while not always subject to ceremonial "ratification" in the village, is usually performed twice: once according to the simple Mbuti custom of arranging and effecting an exchange of brides with the necessary courtesies of prestation and feasting but with no other ceremonial; and once according to the

[P.251-D]

[P.252-A]

local villager custom. The latter ceremony is conducted entirely by the villagers and at their expense. On these occasions the villager takes the leading part and carries out his own ritual, but the Pygmy does not let this supplant his own indigenous way of recognizing the event. The villager ceremony is something the Pygmy adds to his own.

With initiation the situation may seem to be different. The Mbuti have not only adopted the villager custom of initiation accompanied by circumcision, known as *nkumbi*, but they attend the same initiation schools which are always run by villagers, never by Pygmies. Initiation is nothing if not entry into a very definite indigenous system of values, yet here we have the Mbuti placing themselves in a totally subordinate position. The *nkumbi*, according to Schebesta (1952, 281), initiates the youth, Pygmy or villager, into membership of the Lese *tori* association (for the archers) or its Bira equivalent, the *molimo* (for the net hunters). The function

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

MARRIAGE

Marriage, as we have already seen, may involve the Mbuti in village ritual, and even if their Mbuti claim to have been married in the forest according to their own rites, the villagers try to insist on a village ceremony. Their concern is that the marriage shall be protected, as in village society, against disruption. As the Mbuti not only have no system of paying bride wealth but have no wealth that could be paid, the villagers are obliged to supply the wealth they deem necessary to help stabilize the marriage. They say that a marriage without wealth will not last. But as with the *nkumbi*, they feel that the major safeguard they secure by putting the Mbuti through the village ritual is that the marriage then becomes the concern of the tribal ancestors and subject to supernatural sanctions, all of which operate in the interests of the villagers.

An important part of the village ceremony formalizing a marriage between two Mbuti is the admonition given by a number of villagers to both groom and bride, reminding them of their old obligations and telling them of the new. The bride is introduced to her husband's *kpara* and his wife, and is told exactly what the wife expects of her; at the same time she is reminded of her own *kpara* and admonished not to forget where her "relatives" live. In fact, the place that would be occupied by the parents of the bride and groom in a normal village ceremony are, when two Mbuti are being married, occupied by the *kpara*. Each admonition generally ends with a reminder that the tribal ancestors of the villagers have been invoked for their blessings, and the tribe has provided generous feasts for all the relatives of the bride and groom, and wealth to boot, so any infidelity or any breach of the bond will call down supernatural wrath upon the (Mbuti) families of all those concerned.

In the various crises that may face the couple now, it will be all the more important for the villagers to take the necessary ritual precautions, and to investigate any calamity for evidence of witchcraft. Mbuti marriages tend to be somewhat unstable until the first child is born, and indeed are not considered as marriages by the Mbuti until then, separation and the formation of new unions being the rule rather than the exception. The villagers tend to suspect that witchcraft is at work, sometimes suspecting an Mbuti, sometimes another villager. Bad hunting and sickness are considered to be due to witch-

2: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

881 In intercourse the only restriction I could discover was some rather
836 vaguely stated prohibition on a boy holding his partner in his arms.
833 Some adults say that this prevents conception, others say that the
842 girls take contraceptive medicines. Whatever the reason, there is no documented or even reported case of pregnancy arising out of intercourse in an *elima* hut.

881 The *elima* is given wide publicity (unlike the villager practice) and
836 young men from neighboring bands are expected to come and par-
[574] ticipate. If they are whipped during a visit to their band by the *bamelima*, then they are obliged to return the visit. The latter part of the
[584] festival is the time when prospective suitors are sought, though there is still no feeling that betrothal must necessarily result. At this time even the younger married men may enter the *elima* hut, though they will sleep with the senior girls rather than with the *bamelima*. It is nothing unusual for the husband of the provider of the house to do this, nor for an elder brother of one of the *elima* girls themselves. But at this time the younger boys are kept out.

881 Access to the hut may still be had by being whipped, but now there
152 is an additional possibility. In the late afternoons the mothers gather
584 outside the hut, with their carrying baskets, and with a good supply of sticks and stones and any other suitable ammunition. Any youth that wishes to declare his affection for one of the girls is free to attempt to enter the hut, but he must run the gauntlet of the women, who are perfectly capable of beating him soundly and even of throwing him in a river if they do not consider him suitable. Depending upon how well they favor him they will let him pass with anything from token to stiff resistance. If the resistance is stiff the suitor may use his bow and fire fruit peel or small pebbles with it, and fight the women back in this way. When the women become particularly aggressive the youths make a combined attack.

Minor injuries are frequently sustained, and the Mbuti say that in the old days the "war" used to be real, with arrows used instead of peelings. The important thing is that it is still impossible for a youth to enter the *elima* hut, at this stage of the festival, if the older women decide against it for any reason.[2]

881 Once inside he still has to face the girls, and the same conditions as
584 before pertain except that if he is allowed to sleep with a girl and

[583] [2] The drama not only appears like a reenactment of the proverbial "marriage by capture," but some Mbuti say that they used to have to fight and carry off their brides in this manner.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

584 for permission for her to live with him. He will already have proved his manhood by running the gauntlet and by sleeping with the girl, and the fact that he has succeeded in these endeavors is alone proof of his acceptance. He now only has to prove himself as a hunter, and the act of betrothal is sealed by his killing one of the larger antelope and presenting it to the girl's parents, perhaps also with some other gifts, such as a bow and arrows, bark cloth, or a machete.

584 591 The girl then goes to live with him, unless it is considered preferable, probably on grounds of band size, for the boy to join the girl's band. In either case, or if they both belong to the same band, the girl simply builds a hut without any ceremony, and they live in it. No particular note is made of the occasion, though there may be a few jokes made at their expense, and they will be allowed considerable 58 freedom from camp routine for a few days. No further change in status [851] takes place until the girl becomes pregnant, at which time we might consider that the betrothal becomes effective as marriage. Separation before this takes place is perfectly possible and likely, and takes place without any comment, difficulty or restitution. Separation later, after childbirth, is more rare. If a couple have lived together for a long time (over a year) without having children, they will also be considered as married. This is unusual, however, for the object of marriage is in good part to have children, and if a couple fails, each will accuse the other of sterility and seek a new partner.

584 621 583 In seeking a partner who has not slept with him in the *elima* hut, a boy goes through the same procedure, except that the band will be called on to give its approval, and the prospective union will be discussed, elders having the most say. If he is refused, and if he and the girl are persistent, they may elope, joining another band. In this case that other band will be expected to provide a girl in exchange, for the system, such as it is, is one of sister exchange in the widest classificatory sense of the term. It frequently does take place between full brothers and sisters, but equally frequently there is no attempt to effect exchange so long as the married couple remains within the band. If the marriage is out of the band, then any return marriage, regardless of kinship, is considered to restore the balance. Again, in view of the constant fluctuation in band composition, it would be of no advantage for any more formal system to pertain.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

MARRIAGE

Betrothal and marriage among the Mbuti, then, are permissive. Prescriptions and prohibitions are minimal, and even preferences are not dominant. But permission of the band or bands involved is required. In giving assent a band does not concern itself with the niceties of the kinship relationships involved, nor with the question of reciprocal obligations and privileges, except for the question of sister exchange. While not expecting an immediate exchange to be made, or even asking for a suitable future exchange partner to be named, the band bears this reciprocal obligation in mind and will demand that it be fulfilled the moment such fulfillment becomes necessary to band composition.

Considerations in approving a betrothal or marriage are personal and economic, and to a lesser extent political. The affections of the two individuals concerned is of the utmost concern to everyone, for great mutual affection is considered to lead to a "real marriage" rather than an "empty marriage"; that is to say, affection is thought to carry the desire for children, and will so bring stability to the marriage. But the band is also concerned with the character of any individual, male or female, who will join them through marriage. A boy wishing to marry a notorious flirt and bring her to live with him is likely to meet considerable opposition, and may have to go to live with her band. In that case they will consider how faithful he is likely to be, or whether he will find he prefers his own territory to his wife, and will abandon her to return to his own band. In the general discussion that takes place when a betrothal or marriage is proposed these are the kinds of issues discussed, together with the personal habits of the newcomer —cleanliness, laziness, talkativeness and noisiness.

The hunting and gathering abilities of the individuals are also discussed, first to decide whether they are able to look after themselves, and second in relationship to the band economy. As with personal considerations, the discussion is of particular importance if one or the other of the proposed partners is a newcomer. If the marriage is within a band the same discussion takes place, but because both partners are known well the problem is much simpler and arouses less argument. There may still be differences of opinion, however, as to whether the couple are likely to have a real marriage or an empty one.

The band will also discuss the question of residence. If the band is

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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tween the elders of the two bands unless there is some extraordinary 584
complication, such as the adamant objection of the parental age level 561
of one band or the other. If this happens, then two or three elders, male or female, come to visit the elders of the other band, and when the visit is over they will return, taking with them two or three elders to discuss the issue with their band. There is no privilege attached in such exchanges to either band because of sex; any privilege there might be depends upon the question of territory. Thus the band 628
where the young couple is expected to live and hunt, regardless of 591
whether their child is the bride or the groom, is considered as privileged, and consequently is to an undefined extent under obligation to the other band. However, as the question of residence is primarily an economic factor, depending on the relative sizes of the bands, it is generally settled to mutual satisfaction, and residence is not, in itself, a frequent cause of conflict.

Elders may be called upon to interact between two bands if the 628
balance of sister exchange is becoming disproportionate. However, 591
this too is essentially a question of economic balance and is only 583
called to count if a band needs to strengthen itself. Again the issue of locality is more important in determining the matter than is the issue of sex. That is to say, in Mbuti society "sister exchange" can also, under certain circumstances, be regarded as "brother exchange," although insofar as patrilocality is the more usual pattern, so is "sister exchange" more appropriate. However, a band that needs strengthening and has just received a bride for one of its members may conceivably demand that the other band execute the rest of the exchange and provide a groom for one of their girls. They can then insist that he come to live with them. The fact that they have gained by both marriages is excused because of their economic situation.

However regarded, the exchange system is so loose that it is easily 628
adaptable as a mechanism for maintaining hunting bands at economic 582
strength. To this end the hunters have some voice, but it is an issue 583
that is too clear-cut even to call for discussion, and once the issue [561]
is considered on grounds other than band size—i.e., the propriety of the marriage or exchange balance—it is in the hands of the elders. But even more is it all in the hands of the two individuals concerned, for although a serious depletion in the size of the band can induce hunters and elders alike to bring great pressure on its youths to marry, they cannot force such marriage. Interfamilial exchange, after all, is a perfectly simple method of increasing band strength, at least tem-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

porarily, and is considerably easier to arrange than a reluctant marriage. It can be seen, then, that the kinds of relationship existing between bands for the regulation of marriage are necessarily flexible. More important, marriage between bands provides a formal relationship between the nuclear families concerned and so provides also a basis for interfamilial exchange between those bands. To have such an exchange relationship, on a familial level, is of much more importance than wider political ties to a band which only on the rarest of occasions may need to act in concert, as a band, with the other band.

Trespass

Each hunting territory being economically self-sufficient, there is generally no need for economic cooperation. Boundaries are frequently natural features that restrict effectively the movement of both the hunters and the game, so trespass is also restricted. However, if following especially prized game, hunters will follow it across such boundaries with little or no hesitation. It is even said that if a band's territory is exceptionally unproductive, the band may move into a corner of its neighbor's territory, the furthest removed from wherever that band is camped at the time.

It is understood that in the case of pursuit of quarry a portion of the game will be sent to the resident band. It is equally understood that, if moving into someone else's territory, they should be notified and their permission sought. If either of these provisions is not maintained it may lead to friction, and a delegation of hunters from the offended band will visit the others in their camp, perhaps even staying with them for a few days. The question of who forms such a delegation is again largely an economic matter, for the members have to be drawn from the hunters, and the home band will obviously be unwilling to decrease its hunting efficiency to any significant extent. There is the stated possibility of a resort to fighting with wooden clubs; in one instance a few young hotheads suggested using spears, but this appeared to be more a figure of speech to indicate extreme anger, and was promptly rejected by the older hunters. I have, in any case, come across not a solitary instance of such open hostilities taking place between two bands. The visiting hunters are received with respect, and the trespassing hunters generally say that they intend to fulfill their obligations and, as a sign of good faith, offer to send out a hunt so their visitors can bring meat back to their band. If the host

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

THE GOOD DEATH OF BALEKIMITO

156

About a year after I had left the last time, Kolongo had been killed by a crocodile, and his mother had been so upset she had left the group and her entire family, and gone back to her old village. Her other son, Ekianga, remained as head of the family. It was a different clan but related by marriage to Njobo and Masisi and Manyalibo.

Ekianga was anything but a traditionalist in some ways, though in others he was as conservative as the rest of his relatives. His most untraditional act was to have three wives. He was a very great hunter, and as vain as could be, and he liked imitating the ways of the outside world, where it is a sign of wealth to have many wives. The Pygmies say that one is enough to manage, and judging by Ekianga's constant domestic difficulties they are right. He was hairy, broad-chested, and powerful almost to the point of ugliness, and from somewhere he had learned how to put on a perfect toothpaste smile. He always built his huts a different shape from everyone else's, and in the Pygmy camp near the village his house was the biggest and the smartest of them all, sheltering his entire ménage.

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His youngest wife was a beautiful girl called Kamaikan. She was even lighter than most Pygmies, yellowish-brown, instead of the more usual coffee-brown. Her brother and mother also lived with the same hunting group, and there was constant friction, for on marrying her Ekianga had given a "sister"—actually a fairly distant relative—to her brother, Amabosu, in exchange. This exchange is made with the full consent of all parties, but none the less it leads to a division of loyalties, and Amabosu was a very temperamental Pygmy. He was a fine hunter, but he was particularly renowned as the best singer and best drummer and best dancer in the area; for these qualities alone his prestige was enormous. His skinny old mother, Sau, was not without fame of her own. Old and infirm people, amongst the Pygmies, are regarded, not exactly with suspicion or mistrust, but with apprehension. In a vigorous community of this kind where mobility is essential, cripples and infirm people can be a great handi-

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3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

cap and may even endanger the safety of the group. Hence there are numerous legends of old people's being left to die if they cannot keep up with the group as it moves from camp to camp. Like old Tungana, Sau knew this, and although she was still healthy she made sure everyone knew it by taking the most vigorous and unexpected part in any dispute, her sharp acid voice betraying a certain bitterness at the way she was treated. For not only was Sau old, she was also almost alone, with only her son and daughter near her, while everyone else had brothers, sisters, cousins, parents, children and grandchildren.

The Negroes said that Sau was a witch and should be killed or driven away. I used to look at her, squatting over the fire outside her hut, knees hunched up to her chin, staring silently into the middle of the camp. She certainly seemed sinister, as she gazed without blinking, taking in everything that was going on, not moving hour after hour. Her son Amabosu, the great singer, had those same staring eyes, and at times looked even more like a witch than his mother did. This family nearly always built their hut next to mine, and I came to be very fond of them.

If these names are confusing to the reader, they at least help to give a picture of the apparent confusion created in any Pygmy camp by the complicated network of intermarriage and sister-exchange. Essentially a camp is a happy-go-lucky, friendly place, but it is also full of all sorts of little tensions that can suddenly become magnified out of all proportion and lead to full-scale disputes.

This particular group was a rather large one, consisting of the two main families—that of Njobo and Masisi, Tungana and Manyalibo; and that of Ekianga and his relatives, including Sau and Amabosu. But to add to the tensions there was a third group which was constantly trying to attach itself. It was intermarried heavily with the other two, as often happens in an attempt to strengthen bonds and establish an unbreakable relationship.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

himself for comfort. He stayed in the forest for nearly twenty-four hours, and when he came back the next night he went straight to his hut, unseen, and lay down to sleep. His hut was between mine and Sau's, and I heard him come in, and I heard him crying softly because even his brother wouldn't speak to him.

The next day Pepei was his old self, and everyone was glad to see him laughing; they were happy to be able to listen to his jokes, and they all gave him food so that he wouldn't have to steal again.

But sometimes a dispute cannot be settled in any of these ways. It blows up too quickly to be ended by ridicule; the participants are too old to be thrashed; yet it is not serious enough to merit ostracism. Such disputes are usually trivial in origin, and often arise from the confined and close conditions of living. Personal relations become very involved in a hunting group, particularly when both members of a sister-exchange marriage are living in the same group.

Under this system, when a boy chooses a wife he becomes obliged to find a "sister"—actually any girl relative—to offer in exchange to his bride's family for one of their bachelor sons. This can be quite a chore, as it may be difficult to find a "sister" who is willing to marry the youth his in-laws have in mind as a groom, and whom the groom himself will also like.

Amabosu had married Ekianga's sister, and Ekianga had married, as his third wife, Amabosu's sister, the beautiful Kamaikan. He had just had a child by her, while Amabosu was still childless. Since Kamaikan was nursing a child, Ekianga was under an obligation not to sleep with her, and his two other wives were happy that at last they could expect him to pay them some attention. But to everyone's dismay he continued to sleep with Kamaikan. And one day Amabosu started making loud remarks across the camp about his sister's health.

This was not at Apa Lelo, but at a later camp, Apa Kadiketu. Amabosu's hut was to my right, and it faced directly across toward

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

good excuse for a mild flirtation and a great deal of feasting. If two Pygmies want to get married, and they are near a village, then they gladly undergo the village ritual, sanctifying the bond later in their own manner. Everyone is happy; the villagers think the marriage is a success because it was performed according to their customs, while the Pygmy knows it is a success because it followed his as well.

The villagers naturally looked on the elima as a prelude to the marriages of Akidinimba and Kidaya. The Pygmies, however, regarded it in no such light. They wanted to get back to the forest, where the girls could get married in their own time and in their own way. This would involve no more than an exchange of visits between the families concerned, and the groom's presentation to his in-laws of a large antelope, and perhaps some arrows and a bow. But none the less they were tempted by the idea of more feasting. So there was considerable conflict of ideas and ideals, particularly as the villagers had their own ideas as to whom the girls should marry.

The elima had created a crisis in another direction also. Pumba, whom Akidinimba had loved so ardently and beaten so thoroughly to show her affection, had kept his part of the bargain by coming to the elima house during the final week, fighting his way in as a man. But once inside, instead of making love to Akidinimba he paid court to Kidaya. Fortunately for Kidaya, but unfortunately for Pumba, she did not respond, and without her permission Pumba had no way of forcing his attentions further. So he stalked out of the elima house, pursued by shrieks of rage from Akidinimba. He took his friend Kelemoke's hand briefly, then left without a word. He crossed the Epulu and went back to his camp, and he was seen no more.

Everyone was upset, because they all felt that the sooner Akidinimba got married the better. Besides, Pumba was popular—so much so that some pressure was brought to bear on Kidaya to force her to accept him. But Kidaya had set her heart on a handsome youth named Atete, who was attached to the village of Katala, several miles

beyond Eboyo. So she refused to have anything to do with Pumba.

Since the prime objective was to get Akidinimba married, once it was plain that Kidaya would not take Pumba, everyone lost interest in her and returned to the problem of her fellow initiate. Circumstance forced the issue, for while all this was going on a close relative of Akidinimba's, a boy named Mulanga, decided to get married to Atete's sister. Nobody saw any harm in this, and so arrangements were pursued and they were duly married. Mulanga was quite nonplused by the ritual, for he had spent most of his life in the forest and knew little of village customs. He was particularly perturbed when at the end of the ceremony his bride was seized by a village woman and led away. He was not quite sure what to do and trotted behind them at a safe distance until he was able to follow his wife into the house that had been set aside for him.

Mulanga's marriage meant that he was obliged to provide a sister for his bride's brother, Atete, to marry. Villagers will compensate families for the loss of a daughter by the payment of money or goods, but the Pygmies find it necessary to arrange for an exchange, so that no group is ever depleted of its womenfolk. Akidinimba, who had still not forgotten how she had been jilted and insulted, saw in this situation an opportunity for revenging herself on Kidaya, the unwilling receiver of Pumba's attentions. So she volunteered to marry Atete. Everyone, except Kidaya, was delighted, and Atete and his family agreed. By the time the date for the wedding was set, Akidinimba began to have doubts and thinking of the freedom she was about to lose she wept day and night. But there was no escape. The villagers of Katala had arranged a great feast and this made everyone all the more anxious for the wedding.

Atete, however, heard of some honey far off in the forest, several days' march away, and at the last moment he set off. The villagers protested loudly, but Atete merely said that the wedding could take place any time, but the honey could not wait. As it was only a

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

585 Pygmy wedding the villagers shrugged their shoulders and forgot to notify Akidinimba. So on the appointed day, when the young bride-to-be had been painted and richly oiled, she set off, weeping hard, to find, when she arrived, no sign of Atete, no indication of any of the promised preparations for a wedding, and nobody who had the least idea when Atete might be back. Akidinimba brightened up at once and suggested returning to Epulu. But having got that far, her relatives decided to stay. Besides, this was Ngoma's village and they could be sure of being fed well.

585 An elderly village woman swept out a dark and dirty two-roomed 594 house in the middle of the village, and told the bridal party that they could wait there. She reluctantly went to see that food was cooked for them, and word was sent out to Atete, in the forest, to return quickly before the bridal party ate up the entire village. By nightfall there was no word, but the Pygmies decided that since they were being fed so well they would stay over and see what happened the next day. They sang for a while, but things had fallen rather flat and the singing did not last long. When the others went to sleep Akidinimba was crying once again.

The next day dragged its hot and dusty way along, and still there was no sign of the groom. The bridal party began to get as restive as the villagers, but still they decided to stay. Mulanga arrived to [593] try and persuade his young wife to return with him, but she refused, saying she was not going to miss her brother's wedding for any husband. He retorted that it looked as though there was not going to be any wedding, to which she replied, "In that case you will have [583] no bride." This is one of the difficulties of sister-exchange marriage, [586] for if one marriage breaks up and the woman returns to her home, 585 the corresponding marriage also breaks up. Mulanga, alarmed at the 602 prospect, set about beating his sister, asking the unfortunate Akidi- 593 nimba why Atete did not come, as though it were her fault. He even went so far as to say that it was no wonder nobody wanted to

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1982 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

Sometimes Pygmies talked about the system of bride-wealth used by the villagers, and sometimes they wished that they could use the same system. But for the villager the woman is a laborer in the fields who can cultivate crops that can be sold for cash. From the village groom's point of view it is important to make a satisfactory payment as it not only enhances his prestige but also gives him the assurance that his in-laws will be on his side, not wanting to have to return so much wealth should their daughter change her mind. For the Pygmies this is unworkable. To them a woman is more than a mere producer of wealth; she is an essential partner in the economy. Without a wife a man can not hunt; he has no hearth; he has nobody to build his house, gather fruits and vegetables and cook for him. So a group that loses a woman looks for a woman in return. The Pygmies extend the term "brother" or "sister" so that it can be applied to almost anyone of the same age group, however distantly related, and this means it is seldom impossible to find someone to exchange, and someone who is willing. But sometimes a little coercion is needed. So it was with my friend Kenge.

Kenge often laughed at the villagers, and at the way they sponsor Pygmy weddings, even paying bride-wealth to each other—the "owner" of the groom to the "owner" of the bride. He found it particularly funny when such a marriage broke up, because the two Pygmies considered it a mere flirtation, and the villagers then had to fight over the necessary restitution of wealth. But he wished he had been able to use the system to get himself a wife.

He was deeply in love with a particularly attractive young girl named Maliamo and badly wanted to marry her. He had three sisters, but one was married to Masimongo, one was still too young, and the third was unwilling. Yambabo, the unwilling one, was a very determined girl, as stubborn as Kenge himself. She was quite fond of Maliamo's brother, a slim, light-skinned youth called Taphu. But nothing in the world would make her admit it once she saw that Kenge wanted to use her in order to get Maliamo.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

593 152 [581] bleeding, with one eye swollen. And still she refused to marry Taphu.

From that morning on, we all accepted the fact that Kenge was going to continue beating his sister until she gave in, and it was just a question of how long she could hold out. One day, when her brother had been particularly bad-tempered with her she ran away to their mother's home, many miles to the east. I asked Kenge if he was going to follow her, but he shook his head. He said, "Our mother will beat her much more severely than I. She knows that [836] Yambabo loves Taphu but is too lazy to get married. All she wants to do is to sleep with him. She is as bad as Akidinimba." And so he stayed, sitting by the fire all day in a sulk, leaving me to cook my own food and his.

593 521 That evening the old men discussed the case by the central fire, with the women throwing in remarks from the huts all around. They were unanimous in believing that Kenge had done the only thing he could have done. Perhaps he should have beaten her harder, • 583 584 Tungana said, for some girls like being beaten. And after all, it was not as though he had chosen her husband as the villagers do, sometimes forcing a young girl to marry an old and ugly man merely because he can pay more bride-wealth than a younger man. Everyone knew that Taphu loved Yambabo as much as she loved him. He had asked her to marry him half a dozen times at least and was constantly giving little presents of meat and honey to her mother.

593 584 The next morning, shortly after dawn, I heard loud weeping and saw a bedraggled Yambabo being marched into the camp by her irate mother, Badorinji. Kenge was wandering about searching for firewood, but he hardly even looked up. He just muttered, "Now you will see, I did not beat her for myself alone."

Badorinji led her daughter by the wrist into the middle of the little village. She called out in her loud, musical voice that her son had always been a good son, a father to his sisters ever since their

own father had died, and a man to her. And now that he wanted to have a wife of his own she had made him a hunting net, but what did this worthless girl do? She gave Yambabo a hefty slap. Yambabo, however, had lost all her fight and could only whimper. When she had reached her mother's village she had promptly been turned around and made to walk all the way back, right through the night. Badorinji continued, telling everyone that her daughter had been a no good right from the start; all she liked doing was eating, sleeping, and going with boys. She would do no work, and she had refused Taphu, who loved her, many, many times. Then Badorinji ended with a masterpiece of statesmanship. She said that she would betroth her youngest daughter to Taphu, which would allow Kenge to marry Maliamo, and that she would have nothing further to do with Yambabo. Yambabo would lose Taphu, and without her mother's help she would never be able to make a respectable marriage, for she had no other brothers. She could find someone to marry her, but unless a girl were given in exchange for her she would have no status and no security. Only her mother or Kenge could give her away and receive a girl in exchange.

Yambabo let out a cry of protest at this. She said that she was tired and wanted to lie down, and why did everyone shout at her. Her mother slapped her once more and asked her if she would marry Taphu or not. Yambabo, with a final wail of protest that everyone had treated her so badly that she would surely die, gave up the battle and said that she would marry Taphu, or anyone else for that matter.

For the first time Kenge stopped trying to pretend that he was not listening to what was going on. He called a young boy and told him to run to Babama village with the news, and to tell them to get ready to receive Yambabo's wedding party. He added, hopefully, "And tell Maliamo that she is my wife now and I want her to come here at once and cook my meals for me. I am too busy to go and collect her."

He then went up to his mother and greeted her, which he had not done since she entered the camp. She put her arms around him, and it was strange to see the proud, sophisticated and very adult Kenge allowing himself to be embraced with such a show of affection. But what Badorinji had said was true—he was a good son. And he was a good brother too, for when Badorinji had finished hugging him, doing a little dance at the same time, he took the weeping Yambabo's hand and led her to the hut opposite mine, and there he put his arm around her and whispered something in her ear and he sent her inside to lie down and sleep.

Taphu sent word back that Yambabo would have to hurry as he was off to the forest and would not be back for a long time. Maliamo also sent a message, to say that the villagers would not let her come until Yambabo had married Taphu, because they did not trust Yambabo. The villagers announced their opinion that Kenge had already slept with Maliamo so much that it would not hurt him to wait. Kenge was furious, because this meant that he would have to go through a village wedding, unless he wanted to alienate the villagers by ignoring them. This would have meant losing good exchange-friends who kept him supplied with village goods in return for a few favors in the forest. Kenge enjoyed all the fun and games of a village wedding when someone else was involved, and he was content for Yambabo to go through the ceremony, but for himself he wanted no part of stupid village customs. He was going to carry Maliamo away and give her parents an antelope, or maybe an elephant, like any self-respecting Pygmy. He began dreaming out loud, describing exactly how he was going to track the elephant, and maybe kill a buffalo or two on the way, and he only came back to earth when I asked him how he was going to bring the elephant back to the village. He said that I would see; he was going to Maliamo right now. He set off at once. The next day he returned alone. Maliamo had gone into hiding, not wanting to jeopardize her broth-

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

585 nyunga on the road, and that at the rate he and his friends were going it would take them three days to get back to Babama.

When evening fell, Kenge went up to Maliamo for the first time during the entire day and sat down with her as she served the food she had cooked. He brought me over a bowl and said he wanted me to try his wife's cooking. He sat beside me and ate, as he often did, from the same dish. I was a little curious that he had not paid more attention to Maliamo and I asked him about it. He laughed and replied that Maliamo was no stranger to him; the only difference now was that with Yambabo's marriage to Taphu, Maliamo was able to come to his village instead of his having to go to hers. He had
• [583] given her father an antelope; why did the villagers have to make all this fuss? He abruptly turned the conversation back to more important things—did I or did I not like his wife's cooking? I did.

585 179 186 At the central fire everyone was discussing the way Kenge had treated the villagers. They were mostly secretly delighted, but Masisi said that even if Munyunga *was* a drunken fool, there was no need to be quite so rude to him; that Kenge should have stayed, as he and Moke had done, and merely sat and said nothing. Mulanga, remembering his own wedding, said that he could see no sense in a village wedding anyway. But Masisi pointed out, "If we did not let the villagers think that they arrange our marriages, then how could we expect them to give us such fine feasts and present us with so many gifts?" Moke, picking up his pipe and passing it to his son to be filled, added, "After all, it doesn't really make any difference; you are not married properly until you give your in-laws a forest antelope. If you don't like your village wedding, don't give the antelope."

And so, everyone agreed, a village wedding was great fun, but *"bule"*—empty. It was completely empty, completely and absolutely. With that they laughed loudly and slapped one another on the back, and forgot all about it.

361 621 widows; there are no ritual structures. There is simply one hut for each individual family. The relation of huts 361 621 572 in the circle seems fortuitous, but it is dictated more than anything else by the friendship of women. Women are home most of the day; the men are out hunting. Women perform tasks that require no interaction, but they help each other for company. Friendship among the women generally takes the form of pairs, although subsidiary friendships may make larger groups. Hence the position of the huts, or rather the determination of who lives in which hut in what part of the circle, is determined purely on the intimacy of women in their daily work routines.

621 361 Once they are in this camp they will stay on another three months or so until the game is scarce, the fruit gone, the camp ringed by high refuse heaps and pungent with the smell of rotting food and human refuse. Or they will perhaps move on a little earlier if someone dies and is buried there. They do [805] not count time; they simply respond to the practical needs of the moment, the way lower organisms respond automatically to changes in intensity of light. Moreover, they will never go back to exactly the same place. One reason for this may be the presence of funeral remains; but there may be other reasons. The pygmies do not say why, and probably do not know.

628 574 **Intercamp visits.**—For various reasons, individual pygmies and even whole families often visit neighboring [583] camps. With exchange marriage it is necessary to know the people with whom an exchange is to be made. Thus, the need of finding wives makes it necessary to establish relationships between members of different camp units. Aside from marriage, other circumstances sometimes inspire these visits, as, for example, when an individual

628 574 man, or even several men, may feel picked on, or in other words are unable to adjust themselves to the other members of the group in which they live. They will go on extensive visits to kinfolk in other bands, and some may never return. In this case they will [177] change their allegiance to new Negro hosts. Or they may have trouble with their Negroes and leave for this reason.

628 574 602 More frequently, however, a number of families will simply visit another camp, presumably because of the desire of women to spend some time with their parents, brothers, and other relatives. The camps are exogamous and the only chance a woman ordinarily has to see her own people is on such visits, during which the boys build up ties with their maternal uncles and [584] cousins. These visits, again, serve to establish relationships leading to marriage. Visits of this kind usually do not last more than two or three months, or the ordinary life of a camp site, but they serve to keep the pygmy world in a state or circulation, and to break up the monotony of the limited sets of relations possible among pygmies in a single camp and between pygmies and their specific Negroes.

595 582 **Marriage and divorce.**—The usual form of pygmy marriage is monogamy. One reason for this is the scarcity of women—many prefer to become second wives of Negroes and live in the ease of the village, thus avoiding the hardships of forest food gathering. 595 When a man does have two wives, one will live with him, while the other will live with her own kin, usually in a different camp, where he visits her on oc- [581] casion. Actually, the economic incentive to polygyny is absent, for whatever work the second wife performs benefits her own kinfolk only.

583 [582] Marriage takes place at or near puberty, and normally involves the technique of exchange. In its present

[P. 336-B]

583 form, this means that a man must offer his sister for marriage to his intended wife's brother. However, since all families do not contain an even number of boys and girls, this principle may be extended to the larger family group, and a young man may offer a cousin, or an older man a niece, as his exchange partner.

586 Divorce is common and as informal as marriage. Usually it is the woman who makes the initial decision: she simply packs up her belongings and moves out. She will take her children with her and will be considered a member of her own parents' kinship group until she should remarry. This principle is also followed in the case of a widowed woman. A divorced woman's sons will remain with her until they are old enough to go hunting, when they will rejoin their father.

Although the original pair in an exchange marriage may have been drawn to each other by mutual affection, the same is not always the case with the exchange partners, whose union may not be of long duration. The really [583] unpleasant feature of exchange marriage is that if one union breaks up, the complementary marriage must also be dissolved; hence, if one couple cannot tolerate each other they will cause the separation of the other.

589 836 Because of the scarcity of women, a certain number of young men are forced to live out a painful bachelorhood for a number of years. Such bachelors usually, if not always, dally with girls whom they cannot marry because of kinship, or with other men's wives, and are a constant cause of 583 trouble. However, if the family group 591 of a boy's father fails to get him a wife, 584 he may, in desperation, appeal to his 602 mother's family group to provide one. If they do, he will go to live with his mother's people, although he is still technically a member of his father's

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group and a stranger in the camp, if it is a different one.

Pygmy Symbolism

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Food tabus.—The pygmy recognizes certain animals as symbols of definite relationships or identifications, in connection with which recognition he observes special food tabus.

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This principle is particularly involved in connection with the animals which represent the clan totems. Each clan has its own private totem animal, which is not, in most cases, actually considered an ancestor. Rather, it has acquired its position because, in the local mythology, an animal of the same species performed some special act of kindness which got one of the clan ancestors out of a perilous situation.

The animals which symbolize clans are always animals which are hunted by men; they are never slow-game animals, which women collect. Vegetable species are never used as totems. The totems are animals which may or may not be caught, about whose capture there is some element of chance, some possibility of crisis, and they are usually food animals, although leopards and chimpanzees, which are off the main dietary line, are totemic animals.

The pygmy will avoid eating the flesh of his own clan totem, but he can eat the flesh of totemic animals of any other clan. However, the pygmy recognizes seven species of antelope, and a dozen of small monkeys; and the clan totem will be, for instance, one species of antelope, rather than all antelopes. Therefore, these tabus do not cause anyone much discomfort, for no one species of these animals accounts for more than a small fraction of the total food supply, and each clan can eat six out of seven kinds of antelope, or eleven out of twelve kinds of monkeys.

[P. 337-8]